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Twentieth-century masterplans of Baalbeck tourism and fantasies of modernism and classical antiquity are privileged over the present everyday. How can an alternative be envisioned?

On cities and designers: a Baalbeck Story

Marwan Ghandour

Baalbeck is a city in north-east Lebanon situated within the mostly rural Beqaa Valley region. It is the location for the internationally known temple complex which was built in the Second Century AD, during Roman rule, dedicated mainly to the local god Baal/Jupiter, Bacchus and Venus. The temple complex is a major tourist destination in the region and a primary one in Lebanon. It is also the site for the annual Baalbeck International Festival for the performing arts which was initiated in 1955. However, tourism activity has little impact on the rest of the city as the majority of the tourists seldom visit any place other than the archaeological site. To the tourists, the populated part of Baalbeck remains in the distance, as a background for their view which is focused on the ancient stones. During the last decade, Baalbeck has been facing economic stagnancy with a growing detachment between the city and its archaeological site. While the city itself is embedded within its regional political, social and economic conditions, the archaeological site has a separate national and international circuit of influence which is overseen by the ministry of tourism and the DGA (Directoire Général du Archéologie), located in Beirut, the Lebanese capital. Baalbeck is a city that received several state-initiated masterplans during the course of the twentieth century that affected the social and spatial patterns

that exist in the city. This paper investigates some of these social and spatial conditions as they inform the process of architectural design.

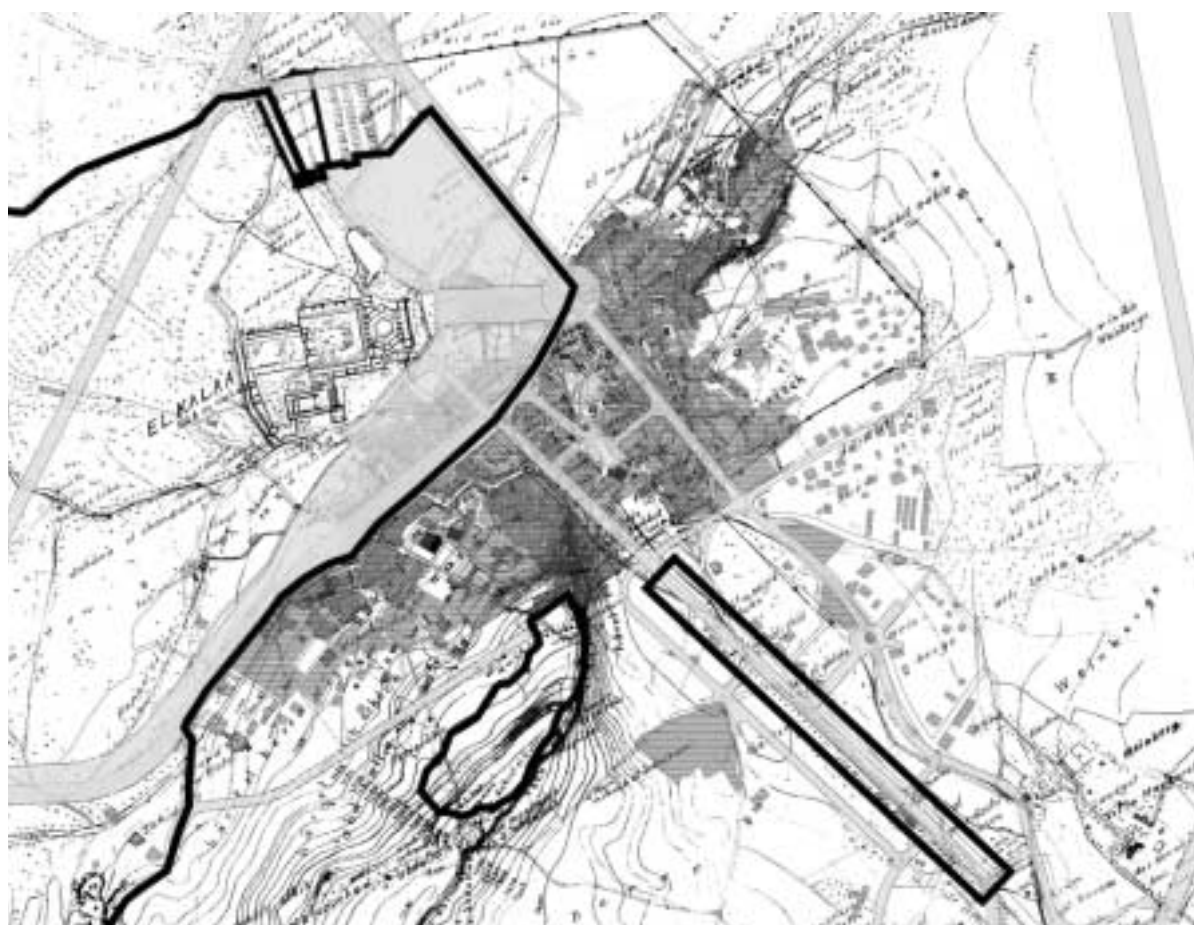
My involvement with the city of Baalbeck happened over a long period of time and took many forms. I visited the ancient temple complex with family and on school trips several times in the 1970s and '80s before visiting it as an architect in the '90s. In 2001-2, I carried out, together with architect-planner Mona Fawaz, an extensive building survey of city core neighbourhoods and proposed building regulations and urban development projects for these neighbourhoods. Following this project I conducted further research into the history of the city at large before I offered a design studio on Baalbeck in spring 2003 at the American University of Beirut. This paper is a result of these different encounters with Baalbeck provoked by my concern to better define the relationship that a designer can establish with the space of intervention; the city. In the following three sections, I will discuss the increasing detachment between the city and its archaeological site that is caused by the successive state-initiated urban regulations and masterplans. My concern is to assess the historical impact of this top down process on the social space of the city and understand the location of the architect within this process. In the fourth section 'The Practice of Space: Learning from Hay el-



¹ Eighteenth-century drawing of the city of Baalbeck in Robert Wood, *The Ruins of Palmyra* (London, 1753). Image scanned at the American University of Beirut Jafet Library Archives



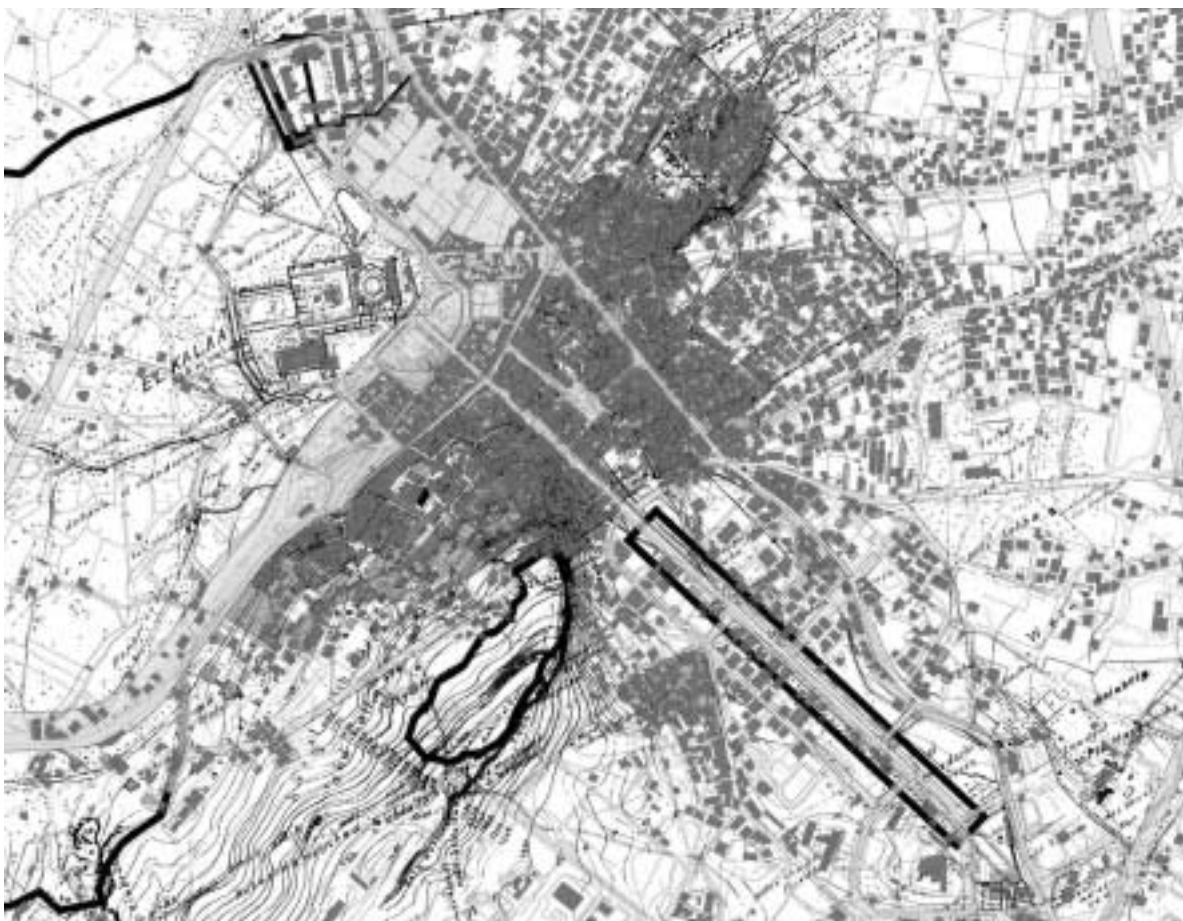
2a



2b



2c



2d

2 Plans of Baalbeck.
 a 1902 plan in Theodore Weigand, *Baalbek: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen in den Jahren 1898 bis 1905* (Berlin and Leipzig: Vereinigung Wissenschaftlicher Verleger, 1905). Image scanned at the American University of Beirut Jafet Library Archives
 b Overlay of 1964 expansion and decrees. 1939 decree is in black outline. 1949, 1955 and 1964 decrees are in grey overlay
 c The Edde winning competition plan for Baalbeck
 d Overlay of building blocks as mapped in 2000

Soloh', I will look into some of the enclaves within Baalbeck that were not affected by these state regulations as a way to understand what these regulations overlooked. In the last section 'Building a Baalbeck Story,' I will delve into the spring 2003 design studio projects in order to conclude this paper by exploring ways where the dialectic relationships existing between the designer, her space of intervention and her disciplinary tools can be more explicitly examined within the design process.

A brief history

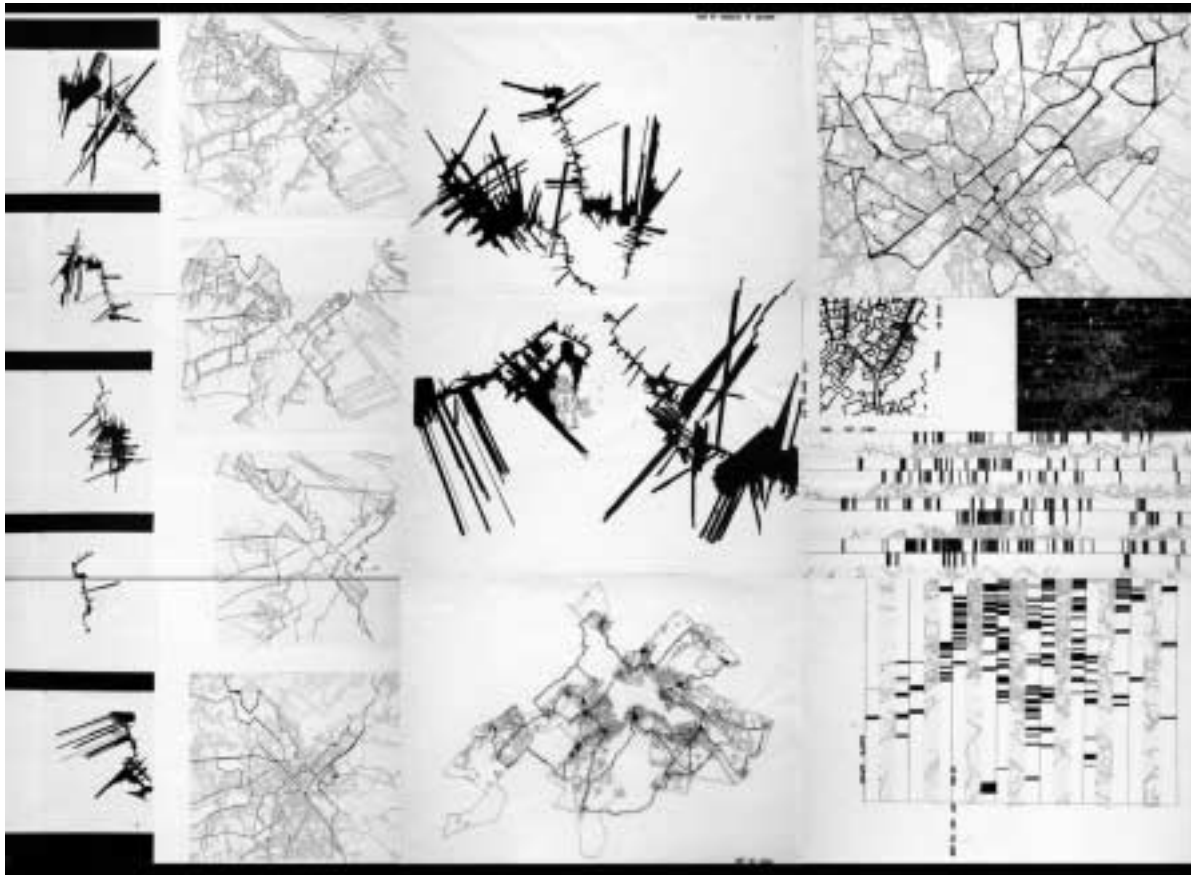
Baalbeck was one of the main stops for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Orientalists who came to explore the Middle East under Ottoman rule. The prominence of the temple complex over the rest of the city, both by size and choice of scene, is evident in these early explorers' drawings [1].¹ In 1898 an archaeological expedition was sent from Germany to Baalbeck to excavate, restore and document the temple complex. The document that came out of the expedition's seven years of work on site remains to this day the main reference for studying the ancient ruins.² In this document, the city of Baalbeck is situated as the context of the study and not the subject of the study which for the first time establishes a formal separation between the city and its ancient ruins. In the German expedition plan [2a], you can see the temple complex to the north-west, the wall of the medieval city, the open fields and Ras al Ain. The latter is the source of the spring water coming from the eastern slopes towards the temple site. The residential neighbourhoods connect these main features of the city unifying major locations that appeared in distant periods of the city's history. It is this continuity in the city fabric that the twentieth-century urban regulations disrupt, allowing the different city parts to be reconfigured in relationship to the image of the newly established state of Lebanon. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, the map of the Middle East was redrawn, mainly by the French and British, and new nations emerged. Lebanon was established as a nation-idea in 1910, it had a French mandate period in 1920 that recognised its new boundaries (Saint Remo 26 April), and gained its independence in 1943. The modern history of Baalbeck consists of a series of actions that repositions the city within the network of Lebanese cities and arguably diminishes its strong relations with the inland cities of what is now Syria to the north and east. These actions took the form of legislative and bureaucratic procedures, but also physical and construction interventions that reinforced the relationship of Baalbeck to the state centred in Beirut and other coastal cities. In what follows, I will elaborate on these actions and relate them to some of the social transformations in which they are implicated.

The first urban regulations and the house of S.

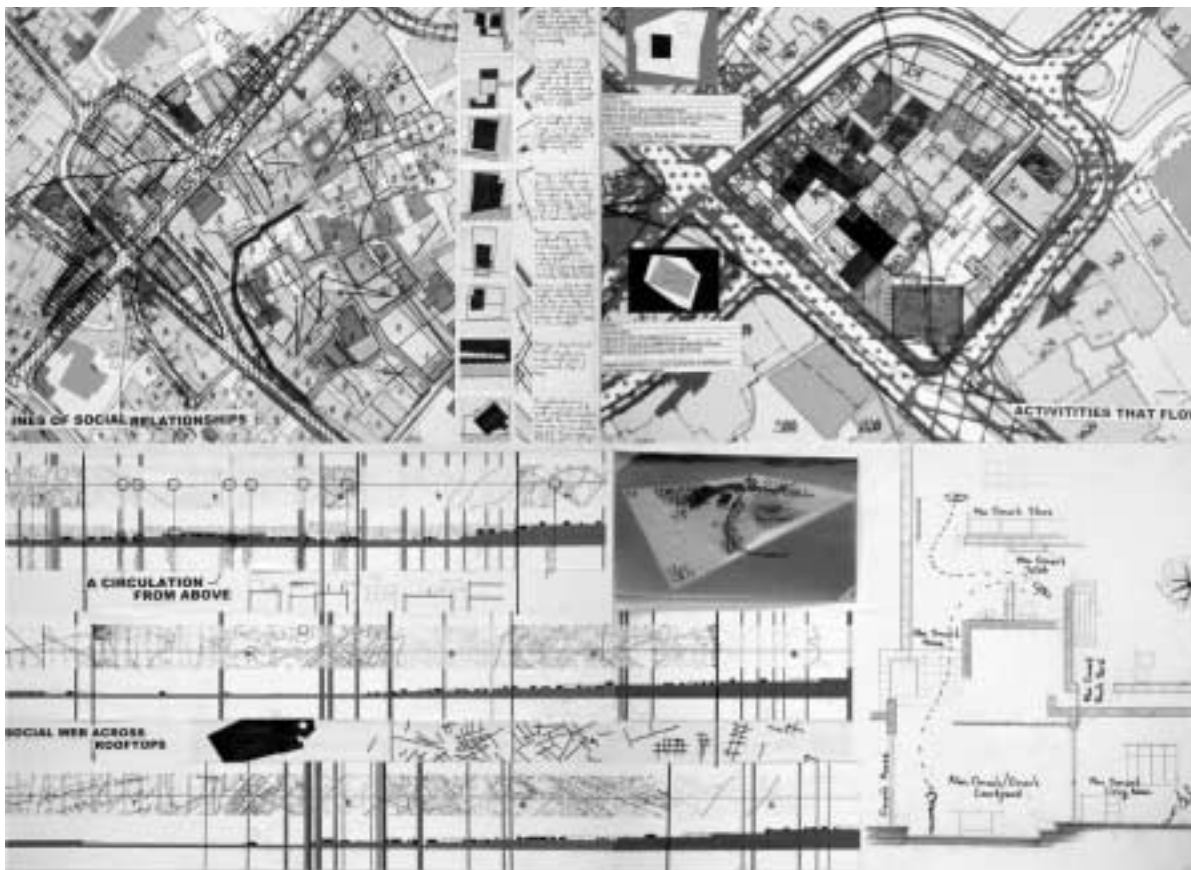
During the French mandate period in Lebanon an official street entry to the city was established by formalising the Abdul Halim al-Hajjar street south-west of the city which extends to the Beirut-

Damascus road. This road became the main avenue through which state power seeped into the city space to reshape it. In 1939, legislation designated three major sites for preservation in Baalbeck: the site of the temple of Mercury on the eastern cliff, the trees that flanked the axial road to Ras al Ain, and the archaeological temple precinct [2b]. The most significant of these is the latter as it established an outline of the archaeological site which included populated neighbourhoods. Another major decree was issued in 1955 which recommended the widening of two major vehicular roads, the first links the Ras al Ain area to the temples site³ and the second links Baalbeck southern entry to the temple-Ras al Ain axis [2c]. These decrees were conceived to facilitate the mobility of tourism within the city while minimising the impact of the city residents on the flowing tourist traffic. These roads connect the tourist coming from the Beirut-Damascus road directly towards the archaeological site of the temples and from there towards the entertainment site of Ras al Ain where tourists have their lunch in the restaurants that have developed there. In the same year, a building law for Baalbeck was issued in which zoning, building heights, setbacks and surface exploitations were designated, this would be the first time that buildings in Baalbeck were legislated along 'modern' formal constraints. The other major decree during this year was to clear out all existing residences within the archaeological boundary that was drawn in 1939 so allowing the archaeological site to be visible from Baalbeck entry road, Abdul Halim al-Hajjar street.

It is evident from the 2000 map [2d] that these decrees were not fully executed even though they were still active until 2002 when a new study re-evaluated some of them. Accordingly, the Qalaa neighbourhood, which lies within the archaeological boundary designated for clearance in 1955, was frozen, no building permits issued, no construction changes allowed. This act reveals that the living environment of the Qalaa neighbourhood was considered parasitical to the tourist view. The neighbourhood, after all, was too familiar to be of interest (similar neighbourhoods can be found in the area), too young to be of value (in contrast to the internationally acclaimed ruins nearby), and too local to be of potential (seeming at the time outside the circuit of tourism). On another level, the power of the state was introduced within the private space of the neighbourhood as the line drawn on the map segregated the ancient stones from the lives of the community. Accordingly, the space of the ruins was appropriated, fenced-in and, following the dynamics of the Ministries of Tourism and DGA, detached itself from the daily lives of the residents, whose interaction with the ruins becomes only visual. S., a resident of the Qalaa neighbourhood, lives a few steps away from the temple of Venus, but has absolutely no interaction with the users of the archaeological sites or their economy. The *tannour*⁴ bread S. bakes at home and her preserved mud courtyard house could have been a promising attraction for the numerous tourists who pass by her



3



4

3 Mapping the path of the tourists and the penetration of their gaze into city neighbourhoods.

Project by Sandra Rishani; developed from a single building outline plan of Baalbeck

4 Projecting social network and spatial flows. Project by Wael Awar; developed

from building outline, cadastral, and topographic plans of Baalbeck

street on their way to the temples site. However, S. assumes a passive role within the tourist economy by not attempting to interact with the tourist activity nearby.⁵ The political and bureaucratic conditions that forbid any physical development of her environment shape the way S. inhabits her neighbourhood.⁶ She internalises her detachment from her immediate physical space by not seeking possibilities within it. The drawing of the map has transformed the neighbourhood by voiding it out of its residents' consciousness. They are in constant search for an alternative place to settle. In 2002 the freezing of building activity in the Qalaa neighbourhood was lifted and S.'s house was designated for preservation. That same winter, however, S. moved with her family into the fields of Baalbeck where they own a farm house. The family still uses their original house, which is rapidly deteriorating, for storage and the baking of the *tannour* bread. After more than forty-five years the detachment between S.'s family and their neighbourhood is complete and the lines of the map have become a living reality. S.'s house which exists in what can be considered a prime site in the city has become a service facility for her family's main house in the fields. The subjectivity of S.'s family and their relationship to their neighbourhood was reshaped by the objectivity of the drawing and its consequent legalising process. The 1955 drawing embodied the historical conditions that produced it, and became the tool that propagated the impact of these conditions to the present day. In that sense the drawing is part of the reality of the city even though what it showed did not reflect the social and physical conditions of the city. The 1955 drawing is the state's version of what the city is, which will continue to shape the life of the residents, the strategy of the state officials and the actions of design professionals.

The modern state and the architect's vision

In 1964 a new set of interventions were legislated, most significantly a vehicular road that aligns with the axis of symmetry of the Jupiter temple. This road starts at the propylaea of the temple and ends at a newly legislated roundabout within the city [2b]. The road and roundabout suggest the clearing of numerous residences, a process which was never fully executed. Such an approach conceived the experience of the city from the point of view of the ruins where the geometry of the temples reconfigured the space of the contemporary city. This illustrates a consistent trend in Baalbeck planning that has promoted the dominance of tourists over the residents. The designer/planner adopted the view from the archaeological site towards the city rather than the daily view of the city space towards the ruins. This designer's vision of Baalbeck is best illustrated by the first-prize winning project of the Baalbeck masterplan competition of 1963 designed by Henri Edde, one of the pioneering modern architects of Lebanon [2c].

In his scheme, Edde proposed to wipe out most of the contemporary neighbourhoods, build a 'Roman city' in their place made out of square blocks, to

recreate the 'natural habitat' of the ancient temples. Baalbeck residents, in this scheme, were repositioned in modern building blocks to the north-east; they were made harmless to the everlasting historical city. Other than an affluent neighbourhood next to the temples, the only parts that Edde preserved from the city were a handful of residences that he labelled 'popular housing,' as an 'anthropological' sample to probably show tourists how people 'used' to live here! The marginalisation of the contemporary city and the dominance of the ancient archaeology in these masterplans reveal the ideology of State representatives and 'modern' professionals, an architect in this case. Indeed, the Lebanese state after its independence needed to authenticate an identity which legitimated its newly formed boundaries and designated them as separate from the Syrian hinterland. The residences of the contemporary city of Baalbeck were too similar to the ones in other Syrian cities and villages, and as such they were factors of assimilation rather than differentiation. It is the two millennia old archaeological site which became one of the icons of Lebanon, printed on money bills, stamps, and in books. By extension, anything that encroached on the clarity of this image was rendered parasitical and unworthy. Edde pushed this logic to an extreme by looking at the contemporary city as ruin within the ever present Roman city. The contemporary city was represented through the samples of 'popular housing' as a period in the life of the original and true ancient city which can be immediately reconstituted and embraced in the modern nation. This was done by the architect revealing and emphasising internationally acknowledged cultural icons, while at the same time packaging, containing and eliminating representations of locality and familiar history which were rendered marginal. This attitude resonated well with the authorities that were developing plans for modern Baalbeck for years, which explains the pioneering role of architects (as designers and planners) in spatialising power strategies. The history of Lebanese spatial intervention in Baalbeck acknowledged the advent of modernity and the permanence of the ancient ruins while it completely ignored the contemporary city and the way it is produced daily.

The practice of space: learning from Hay el-Soloh

In this section I will look into Hay el-Soloh neighbourhood in Baalbeck to understand what regulates the production of a normal traditional neighbourhood in Baalbeck, which operates outside state authority.⁷ Looking at the current map of Hay el-Soloh, in the north-east part of the city, you can see an obvious boundary that formally separates two types of building morphology [2d]. One area includes geometrically defined building blocks against an adjacent area with more varied building shapes, smaller in size, intricately interconnected. This boundary actually defines the demarcation between building blocks that follows the official modern building law regulations developed in the 1950s while the other residences follow an informal law that

cannot be dated. The official modern building law specifies exploitation factors and a formal envelop within which buildings should fit. The informal law, on the other hand, designates socially accepted practices in space that guides building activity without dictating its form. The residences of Hay el-Soloh are a particular type of courtyard house; they almost always originate from a two-room unit with a front court. The open space is spatially and programmatically central to the residence; it is the space in which all activities are linked and the space which all members of the family occupy. The court then becomes a site of further building additions that are triggered by family needs such as more services, new marriages, growth of family, retirement of the father and so on. These incremental additions are guided by two basic rules: first, new blocks always have to ensure a two metre minimum outdoor space in front of any opening, in existing or new buildings, to allow for proper natural light and ventilation. Second, none of the rooms can overlook the adjacent neighbour's property; all property should remain visually private. Exceptions to these are extended families that allow each other to overlook each other's spaces, but reserve the right to deny this visual access, in case of family disputes or rental by a different family. The third rule is that streets are a

shared domain and so the only space through which people can interact and overlook each other. In the courtyard residences of Hay el-Soloh neighbourhood there is a total coherence between the social structure and the space of the city as they dialectically formulate and reformulate each other. So the residential neighbourhoods are designated with family names that create the clusters that shape the urban fabric. It is a cluster that is initiated by the family's great-grandparents and that same cluster gets denser and more diversified as the family grows. At this point, the majority of the old neighbourhoods still abide by the (illegal) informal law; most of the city extensions follow the modern law. As the modern block can open visually to the surrounding lots, the privacy of the courts is violated with these new buildings, causing the deterioration of the courtyard house in Baalbeck and a state of confusion between the spatial practices of these families and the spatial guidelines of the Modern law. The most devastating result of this confusion between the informal law and the modern law is the deterioration of space quality in the city. This deterioration is caused mainly by the construction of new blocks that are outward-looking and area-maximising, built in the mentality of the modern law, within a fabric of narrow winding streets configured in relationship to the spatial practices of the courtyard house.

There is no evidence that the informal law of Baalbeck, which has been in practice for generations, was known by the architects who set the guidelines for the development of the city of Baalbeck. Throughout the twentieth century, architects and

5 Design studio students with their drawing, model and text of the 'City Residence' exercise



5

planners attempted to modernise the city and protect its archaeological assets paying very little attention to the implication of their actions, plans, and thoughts on the lived experience of the city. In their attempt to visualise the future of the built environment, architects tended to see their design activity outside contemporary social conditions; outside historical discourse. Conversely, the current conditions of Hay el-Soloh completely exclude the architect; the modern designer who lives outside the space of intervention and operates in a network that might extend outside the city. Consequently, the current challenge in Baalbeck, I believe, is to define a role for the designer that can produce new spaces and spatial regulation without marginalising daily spatial practices in the city. To address this problematic, I will conclude this paper with the work produced in an architecture design studio which I offered at the American University of Beirut in spring 2003. The studio 'Building a Baalbeck Story'⁸ was centred on acknowledging design as an activity embedded in contemporary practices that are not separate from the social and political conditions within which design occurs. The majority of the 18 students in the studio hardly knew Baalbeck, though they were familiar with its temples.

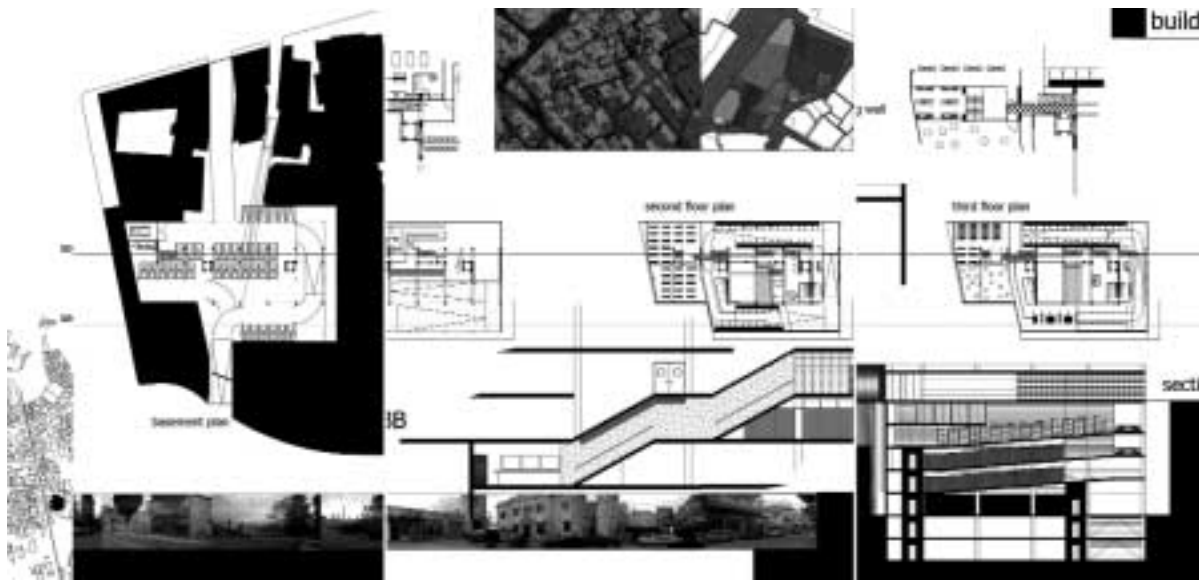
Building a Baalbeck Story

The design studio recognised three social spaces which are dialectically constituted within any design activity: first, the space of the studio which is the disciplinary space equipped with its particular tools of representation and production. Second, the space of design intervention, in this case the city of Baalbeck, which is a space that is continuously evolving by environmental and social conditions and resources. The third space is the space of the self, namely the designer positioned within her social space and whose actions produce spaces of differentiation and assimilation. The aim of the studio was to understand design as an activity that is produced by the interaction between these three spaces and the players that inhabit them respectively. It is important to note here that since the premise of the studio is to acknowledge the dialectics existing between the three spaces of production and the design product, that product remains specific to the political economy of the academic institution. As such it is not a design product that can become a model for the professional production without undergoing major transformation. The design space within a professional firm includes various voices, networks, processes and economies that are radically different from the ones within the university design studio. The design studio highlighted the fact that shifting between these two spaces of production, the academic and the professional, the designer needs to be conscious of the particularities of each space of production in relationship to the space of the self and the space of intervention. Consequently, the design studio did not aim at producing design models that can replace existing professional ones, but rather it aimed at producing knowledge of the

design discipline that can be later carried forward by the designer into her future space of production. As such, the studio, throughout the various exercises, focused on the disciplinary tools of production as the main field of knowledge to address.

The first three exercises of the studio identified one of the spaces to study in order to gain an understanding of the possibilities and limitation that each space has in controlling the process of design. The first exercise dealt with the disciplinary tools of representation where the students were asked to narrate, construct and analyse the city of Baalbeck out of its representations: maps, building law, text and photograph. These exercises blur the distinction between the official knowledge of Baalbeck, embodied in the various representations, and the fictional one which is produced by the designer in her interaction with these representations. Fictional representations play the role of excavating what has escaped formal and textual mapping by the authors who produced these objects of representation of Baalbeck. In her paper 'Reasonable Urbanism', Rosalyn Deutsche articulates the importance of fiction in bringing to life what was possible in space but did not happen, or could have happened but was not recognised. Deutsche writes: 'what came earlier only in relation to what did not come earlier, what might have come, and what has not yet come. Social space thus eludes mapping inasmuch as it contains these events that never "took place" as phenomenal happenings'.⁹ The design discourse in the various projects was centred on the multiple meanings of lines and words in relationship to who created them and who is reading them. This exercise acknowledges the importance of these objects of representation as a way of understanding the city of Baalbeck, only to disrupt their authoritative objectivity by the new 'subjective' interpretation of the designer. At the same time, the drawings and texts produced by the student-designer become the new objects of representations of the city of Baalbeck open for further disruption of their objective authority [3 & 4].

In the second exercise, the students were asked to design a 'City Residence' whose programme, users and location are based on their understanding of what a city residence is or should be. The residence was to be designed in the form of a model, a drawing, and one page of text. The aim of the exercise was to bring to the surface the concerns of individual students as they were mobilised by the coupling of the two themes of City and Residence. It was about not only what these concerns are but how they were developed in the three objects of representation. So the design discourse was mainly about design representation as a process of thinking that is inherently reductive due to its material characteristic of the model, drawing and text. Consequently, the designed City Residence is an intellectual possibility that is constructed by the assimilation of the three objects of representation but never fully contained in any single one of them. Extroverting individual concern was thematic but also specific to disciplinary tools of representation [5].



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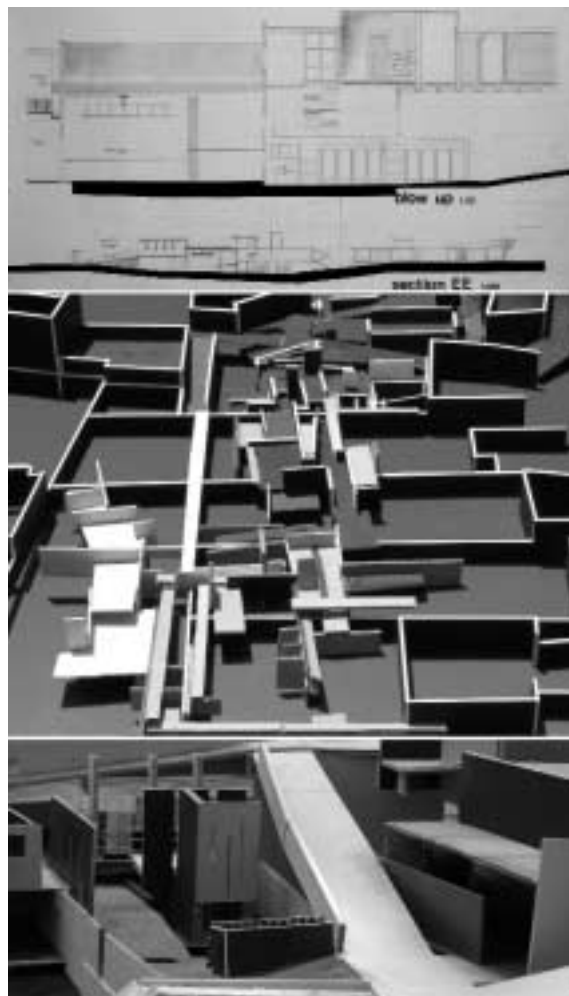
The third exercise was the initiation of the project that lasted for the rest of the semester. This exercise took place in the city of Baalbeck itself where the group spent four days, mainly socialising in the space of the city with the city residents and with each other. The four days were about literally ‘walking in the city’¹⁰ where everyone’s understanding of the space of Baalbeck became particular to their path in the city; the spaces they go through and the people they interact with. The students were asked to learn about space from people they met in the streets of Baalbeck. In the first three days, the students were involved in observing spatial practices in the city and talking to people. In the last day, each student located a place in the city for his/her architectural intervention. At this stage, the city of Baalbeck has accumulated, for the studio participants, layers of diverse meanings and possibilities which were meant to remain contradictory and inconclusive throughout the project development.

From then on, the semester evolved by students producing the building intervention project while experimenting with modes of representation that can contribute to building design development. In what follows I will conclude this paper by expanding on four major achievements of the studio which informed the relationship of designers to their space of intervention.

1 Challenging the architectural typology.

This was generated out of considering the space of intervention as a space that the architects can learn from and not just analyse as a pretext for their building design. Observing different spaces in Baalbeck and interacting with residents the students were introduced to the multiple meanings of space which are generated by the living experiences of the city. Wissam Dik remarked that:

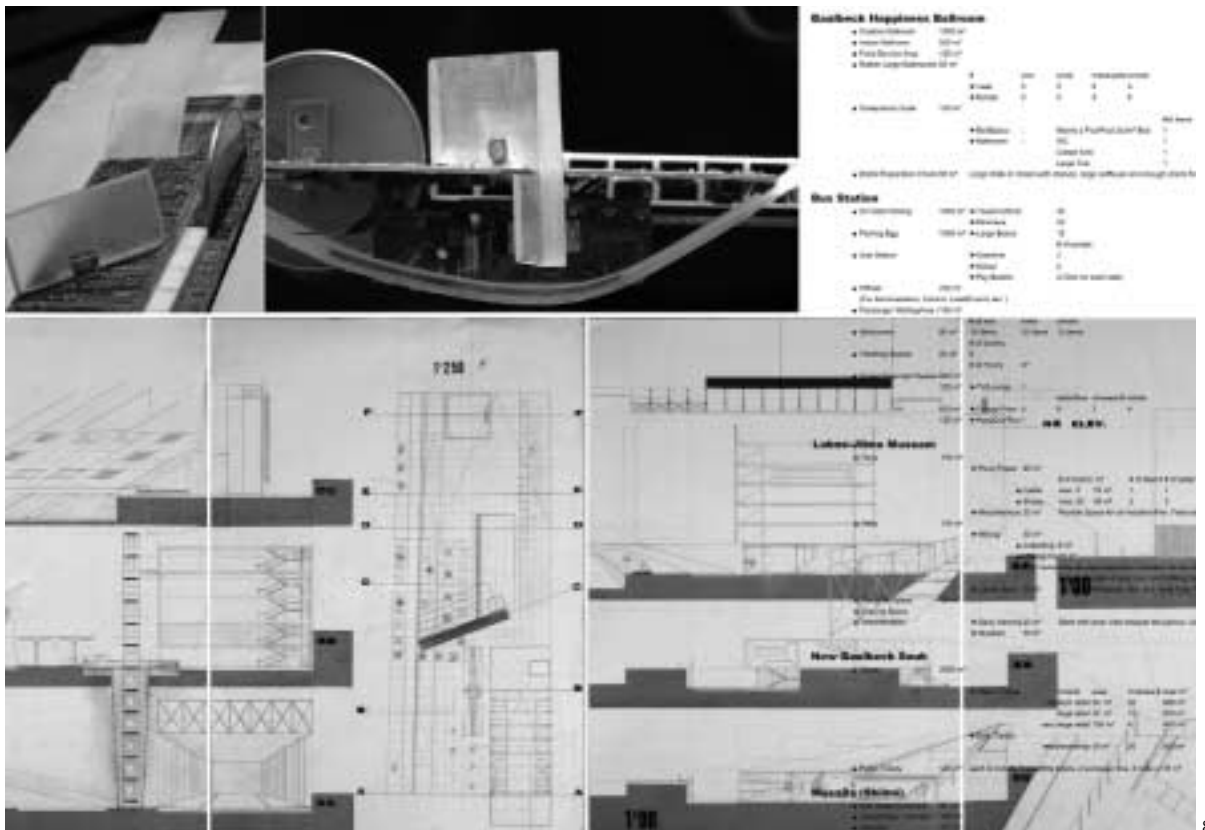
‘... to save on needed resources ... entrepreneurial activities take place in the dwellings themselves. Part of the house is converted to commercial or small scale industrial use in order to provide the extra income much



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6 Selected drawings from Salim Kadi project

7 Selected drawings and models from Abir Saksouk-Sasso project



8

needed ... The dwelling stops being a fixed asset and becomes a generator of income. The furniture is flexible, catering for the changes in use that will occur in different times of the day. In most cases the front section of the house is rehabilitated, while the dwelling is restricted to the rear. The entrance at the back forms with the adjacent houses a communal space that is shielded from the outside.¹¹

Along the same lines, Etienne Nassar writes:

*'... the interesting spaces become the [functionally] blurred spaces, which are in between the public and semi-public ... The kitchen during the day may serve the small café near the street from one side of the house whereas at night it would change into an ordinary private kitchen within the family house ... Moreover, she might use the roof in order to prepare her products for sale...'*¹²

The lack of strong physical boundaries between the different urban functions in Baalbeck and the change of occupancy of space over time led a lot of students to question the legitimacy of the building type as a base for the design process. One example is Salim Kadi's project [6] where he chose to redevelop an infill block in the city commercial centre while preserving the block's existing programmes. The project included a detention centre, a vegetable market, a cinema and a backpacker hostel. For Salim, it is the spatial module that was the building design generator which allowed certain typological boundaries to be broken without losing the integrity of the different administrative units. Consequently, in his project the 'sleeping capsules' of the prisoners of the detention centre overlapped those of the backpackers; the linear circulation of the prisoners

8 Selected drawings, model and programme text from Khaled Malas project

wrapped around and pierced the central mass of the cinema and entertainment centre; and the modularity of the vegetable market resonated with the modularity of the detention cells. In this process, Salim played a complementary role to the user by integrating existing programmatic conditions that emerged out of the historical evolution of the place within a new spatial arrangement that can allow for new encounters and programmes to evolve.

2 Using writing as a design tool.

Writing was a requirement at every stage of the design process. At one level, the linearity of the process of writing and reading introduced a pattern of thinking which is different from the visual representations of models and drawings. On the other level, the referencing system of the text allowed for writing to explicitly overlap other texts, experiences and objects of representation. One mode of writing was the reflective one which acted as a means of structuring and developing the designer's thinking. Within this mode, Sandra Rishani writes on her encounter in Baalbeck:

*'To enter Attiah's household I pass through three different gates (one directly on the street, another at the end of the courtyard and the third is the door of a room), after three different knocks and finally an answer at the third ... I realise the harshness of my intrusion and a sense of threat ... She [sits] secure on her couch while ... I feel as a stranger that has pierced her space violently by my restless knocks.'*¹³

Writing was also used as a unique tool of representation that can introduce historical discourse into the 'lifeless' objects of models and drawings as in Khaled Malas's excerpt from the 'city residence' exercise:

*The Space of Khalida (re)presents maximum insertion. Arriving to the Residence in an automobile, crossing the stretch of the corridor and arriving at a door, the woman that Khalida was is soon engulfed within the Space of Orange and Wallpaper. Like Alice walking through the looking glass, the space of the "City Residence", the space of the imaginary, becomes the only real space: the space of fantasy. It is by crossing the threshold, in a state of orgasmic uproar, that she is named/created: Khalida the Nay-Player/Masseuse.'*¹⁴

Finally, writing was used in developing the building programme by injecting the social dimension of the activity in addition to its functional and spatial dimension. Within this mode, Wael Awar writes:

*The existence of the souk [market] next to the introverted building instigated transformations, both physical and typological, thus rendering the boundaries between the street, the souk and the building questionable. They begin to infiltrate one another at different layers, though maintaining different levels of control over space ... The apartment's users are most likely to be not permanent Baalbeck residents, since the locals of the city usually live in family clusters (either horizontally or vertically spread). The residential apartments would target people that move up to Baalbeck on certain days to spend time with their families that reside there, or people from the neighbouring villages and towns that move into the city for educational or business purposes. On the upper levels, the hostel will target a specific type of tourist, one that is interested in learning and experiencing the local lifestyle ... The washing machine room or the common kitchen becomes a meeting space in which private boundaries disappear. These spaces become the stage ... the mediators between Baalbeck and the tourists, playing the role of informal guides.'*¹⁵

3 Experimenting with representation material.

A major ongoing discussion within the design sessions was concerned with the type of representation that should be used to best explore the current design issue. Each mode of representation was considered a lens through which the designer chose to understand the project at a certain point in time. Representation establishes the designer's relationship to the designed where the choice of material of representation is understood as a 'political' act that subdues certain characteristics of space and highlights others. This meant the displacement of representation as a medium for the production of the architectural object to become itself the object of architectural investigation. Material and scale were the main variables in the production of model and drawing. In Abir Saksouk-Sasso's project [7 top], she developed her section on two scales simultaneously. In the 1:200 scale she explored the continuity between the different building and the urban activities while in the 1:50 scale she designed the structural and material

qualities of the spaces. Similarly, her models emphasised different aspects of the project. The small scale one [7 middle] associated cardboard material with the social clans existing in her area of intervention. The vertical planes represented the social barriers which were not always physically manifested. The horizontal planes represented the spatial flows and all other private spaces were left as voids. This model was generating a social-spatial reading of her project that allowed her to explore possible impact of her building design intervention, which was done in a larger scale model [7 bottom], on the social-spatial patterns. Abir's models open up the possibility of understanding model materials not only through their physical-structural properties but also through certain codes that one can attribute to these materials. So it is sometimes necessary to provide the key to those codes in order to fully comprehend the model. Salim Kadi defined the wax that he used in his model as the material that represents

*'where the program goes "weird", it is the uncontrolled public space. It is a resultant space of the slab, the wall and the site. The space of this wax is defined less by the designer and more by accidents resulting from the interaction of the different user groups at different times/conditions/states of mind ...'*¹⁶

Ultimately, since architectural representations operate through codes, opening up the possibility to experiment with these codes allowed the development of new forms of drawings and models that generated new 'lenses' to explore building design.

Building a story

One of the main objectives of the studio was expressed in its title, which stressed that the design work is a story of the designer's interaction with the social space of Baalbeck substantiated by the working conditions of the studio. Highlighting the specificity of the design process to its temporal and geographical conditions played a major role in breaking down the linearity of the design process from analysis to design concepts to design product. The design process was rather conceived as cycles of analysis and design concepts that allowed the design product to be continuously evolving. This process had an impact on all the studio projects since they were conceived as an opening for the dialectic interactions of the three spaces rather than as a conclusion of the design process. Conceptually, the design product was considered a building design at the same time that it is a framework for further interaction, which eventually goes beyond the full control of the designer. For example, Khaled Malas's site of intervention was across from the archaeological site in which he designed a dairy museum and a grazing ground that was elevated to overlook the ancient ruins [8]. The museum also included a Ferris wheel that is half embedded in the ground, where the wheel rider is not only exposed to an overview of the temple complex but also 'rubs against' the different geological layers in which the city's history is accumulated and condensed.

Embedded in the amorphous masses of the project was a bus station with services and worker accommodation. Khaled's understanding of the different socio-economic cycles that Baalbeck operates within, informed his design intervention where the local, the regional, and the national players are allowed to interact within his chosen site. Khaled's is a project of confrontation and display between Baalbeck as a regional hub of agricultural production and Baalbeck as an internationally renowned historical site. It is a story that emerged out of his continuous interaction, throughout the semester, with various stories he accumulated from readings, various city representations and personal interactions. It is through these continuous confrontations that the studio projects got to be embedded within the city discourse without constituting a closure to that discourse. Even though the project was designed by Khaled, it was designed as a series of spatial conditions that can act as a framework for further interactions between users, at various power levels, that allow for further stories to emerge. These stories are beyond the scope of the designer to produce or design. The designer as such was considered a significant phase, but only a phase, in the life of the city. Understanding the ephemeral role of the designer and the complexity as well as uncertainty of her design tools is one way of

appreciating the brutality of masterplan operations that choose to erase large parts of contemporary city space to draw a final future image of the city. Edde's winning 1963 masterplan discussed above is a good example of this approach. It also put in question the validity of long term building regulations which tend to trap the people affected by them within guidelines formulated out of the socio-political conditions of a particular historical moment; such as discussed in the S. and Qalaa neighbourhood case. Finally, this understanding allows for building design to be open to spatial practices from outside the architecture discipline, such as Hay el-Soloh informal regulations. Such practices can be learned from and incorporated into the architectural design process. This open ended, dialectic building design process would of course face different challenges if this project were to be produced outside the academic space. However, acknowledging the distinctiveness of the three spaces in which the design process operates and understanding their modes of operation together with the various interactions that happen within each is a significant step in redefining the social disposition of the architect and her designed product. It is this knowledge that will be carried forward and transformed within the space of the architectural profession.

Notes

1. See Robert Wood, *The Ruins of Palmyra* (London, 1753).
2. See Theodore Weigand, *Baalbek: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen in den Jahren 1898 bis 1905* (Berlin and Leipzig: Vereinigung Wissenschaftlicher Verleger, 1905).
3. This 1955 decree contradicts the 1939 decree as the widening of the Ras al Ain road necessitated the cutting down of the trees which were designated for preservation in 1939. Under the pretext of executing the 1955 decree, the trees were eventually removed in 1994 to the dismay of a lot of Baalbeck residents.
4. *Tannour* bread is flat dough baked in a mud hole with an open fire; it is a specialty of the villages of the Beqaa Valley in Lebanon.
5. When Mona Fawaz and I suggested to S. to try to sell her *tannour* bread or organise a tourist visit to her house, she was perplexed by this suggestion as she said that tourists would not be interested in anything other than the ancient ruins. S. further explained that throughout her life, she and her family hardly interacted with the Baalbeck tourism activity.
6. Here I am using Pierre Bourdieu's definition of *habitus* as a way to explain S.'s daily practices in relationship to her environment which is influenced by the objectivity of the map and the procedures of implementing its components. Bourdieu writes: 'In fact, a given agent's practical relation to the future which governs his present practice, is defined in the relationship between, on the one hand, his *habitus* with its temporal structures and dispositions towards the future, constituted in the course of a particular relationship to a particular universe of probabilities, and on the other hand, a certain state of the chances objectively offered to him by the social world.' Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (California: Stanford University Press, 1990).
7. My findings on Baalbeck neighbourhoods are based on the analysis and fieldwork done in 2002. This earlier work was developed by architect/planner Mona Fawaz and me, with Hiba Bou Akar, Nada Moumtaz and Sirine Kalashe as part of the project team.
8. The first exercise in this studio was developed in a previous design studio at AUB: 'Building in Old City of Aleppo'. I offered this studio in collaboration with Mazen Labban in 1999.
9. Rosalyn Deutsche, 'Reasonable Urbanism', in *Giving Ground: The Politics of Proximity*, eds. Joan Copjec and Michael Sorkin (London: Verso, 1999), p. 181.
10. Michel de Certeau writes: 'The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other.' Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 93.
11. Wissam Dik, text presented as part of the requirements of the first exercise in 'Building a Baalbeck Story' studio, AUB, 2003.
12. Etienne Nassar, text presented as part of the requirements of the first exercise in 'Building a Baalbeck Story' studio, AUB, 2003.
13. Sandra Rishani, text presented as part of the requirements of building design proposal phase in 'Building a Baalbeck Story' studio, AUB, 2003.
14. Khaled Malas, text presented as part of the requirements of the 'City Residence' exercise in 'Building a Baalbeck Story' studio, AUB, 2003.
15. Wael Awar, text presented as part of the requirements of building

design proposal phase in 'Building a Baalbeck Story' studio, AUB, 2003.
16. Salim Kadi, text presented as part of the requirements of building design proposal phase in 'Building a Baalbeck Story' studio, AUB, 2003.

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Biography

Marwan Ghandour is an Associate Professor at the Department of Architecture, Iowa State University and founder and associate of the architectural firm Bawader Architects sarl, Beirut. His executed projects include private residences, institutional buildings, masterplans and design-planning collaborative studies for urban regeneration. His research is based in multi-disciplinary social theory in which he

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